

# Child Access Prevention (CAP) & Safe Firearm Storage

## Issue Brief for Committee Members

### The Cost of Gun Violence in Utah

- \$5.5 billion annual economic cost statewide
- \$50.1 million paid directly by Utah taxpayers
- Unintentional shootings involving minors continue to rise across multiple counties

### What CAP Laws Are

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws establish secure firearm storage requirements and hold adults accountable when a minor gains access to an unsecured, loaded firearm.

- CAP laws protect responsible gun owners by shielding them from liability when firearms are properly locked.
- CAP laws incentivize safe storage, a long-standing norm in hunter education and military firearm training.
- Numerous quick-access storage options exist that maintain both safety and readiness.

### Evidence of Effectiveness

- Households that locked both firearms and ammunition saw:
  - - 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries
  - - 85% lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children
- States with CAP or secure-storage laws have the lowest rates of unintentional child shootings
- In states with CAP laws, adolescents (14-17) experienced:
  - - 8% decrease in overall suicide rates
  - - 11% decrease in firearm-specific suicide rates

### Recent Utah Incidents Involving Minors & Unsecured Firearms

- St. George (Dec. 6, 2025): Juvenile male shot and killed inside a home
- Riverton (June 17, 2025): Teen shot in the head during a gun-safety demonstration with a loaded firearm mistaken for a dummy gun
- Lehi (Sept. 2, 2024): 8-year-old accidentally shot himself after finding a loaded handgun under a car seat
- Magna (Aug. 22, 2024): 5-year-old killed after accessing a 9mm handgun in parents' bedroom
- Salt Lake City (Jan. 14, 2024): 18-year-old killed by a 16-year-old friend during 'friendly fire' handling of firearms

### What HB 80 Does

- Defines a minor as under 16 years old
- Creates a new misdemeanor for failure to secure a firearm resulting in a minor gaining access when:
  - - An adult (18+) leaves or stores a loaded firearm in their residence
  - - The adult knows or reasonably should know a minor could access it
  - - The firearm is not locked, secured with a trigger lock, or stored in another reasonably secure area
  - - AND the minor uses the firearm in a public place or displays it unlawfully as a threat or during a fight

### Exceptions

- The minor obtained the firearm through unlawful entry
- The firearm was used in self-defense
- The adult reports to law enforcement that a minor accessed the firearm